



SENATE BILL 125: Regional Schools

2011-2012 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Finance	Date:	May 10, 2011
Introduced by:	Sens. Brown, Hartsell	Prepared by:	Heather Fennell
Analysis of:	PCS to Third Edition S125-CSTC-12		Committee Counsel

SUMMARY: *Senate Bill 125 would establish a method for local boards of education to jointly establish regional schools. The PCS makes the following changes:*

- Clarifies that regional schools are secondary schools.
- Allows regional schools to adopt the early college model through the cooperative, innovative high school program.
- Clarifies tuition for community colleges and UNC constituent institution for regional school students is waived only if there is a written agreement between the regional school and the constituent university or community college.

[As introduced, this bill was identical to H264, as introduced by Rep. Glazier, which is currently in House Education.]

BILL ANALYSIS: Senate Bill 125 would establish a method for local boards of education to jointly establish regional schools to promote knowledge and skills in career clusters important in the region where the school is established.

Section 1 of the bill would include the following provisions:

Creation of regional schools. Any two or more local boards of education may create a regional school. Each board of education must pass a resolution that provides the name of the regional school, the other local boards adopting resolutions to create the regional school, identification of the local administrative unit that will serve as the finance agent for the school, and the name of the local school administrative agent that will provide food services to the school. The local school board may develop a plan to provide transportation to the school.

Once the resolutions are adopted, the State Board of Education must approved the creation of the school. Once the regional schools are established, local boards of education may adopt a resolution to expand the regional school.

Governance. A board of directors would be appointed for each regional school. Each board would be made up of the following members:

- One member from each local board of education for the participating local school administrative units.
- Two superintendents – one from the local school administrative unit that serves as the finance agent for the regional school, and one additional superintendent selected from the other participating units.
- Three representatives of the Economic Development Regional Partnership for the economic development region where the school is located.
- One member of the Parental Advisory Council (also established in this bill).

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- A representative of an institution of higher learning partnered with the regional school.

The Board would establish the course of study for the School, in accordance with student performance standards required by law and adopted by the State Board of Education; establish policies and standards for academic performance, attendance and conduct; comply with reporting requirements established by the State Board in the Uniform Education Reporting System; provide data on required testing; require compliance with laws and policies on education of children with disabilities; require the School to meet health and safety standards; apply rules and policies for issuance of driving eligibility certificates; and comply with purchase and contract statutes and regulations.

Admissions. Only students domiciled in a participating unit would be eligible to attend. The number of students from each participating administrative unit would be proportionate to the total student population of respective units. The Board would establish admission criteria, but the criteria would have to give priority to first generation students (a student who has no parent that has completed a 2 or 4 year degree) and would have to include demonstrated academic achievement, student interest in attendance, and parental support for attendance. If the number of eligible students exceeds the seats available, students would be accepted by lot.

Employees. The Board would employ and contract with a principal, teachers, and other staff. The principal would have to meet requirements for certification, unless waived by the State Board of Education. At least 50% of teachers would have to hold teacher certificates, unless waived by the State Board of Education. Employees of the Board would not be employees of the local school administrative unit and would be able to be discharged according to the terms of the employment contract.

Parental Advisory Council. A Parental Advisory Council is established to serve as a resource to the Board. Each local board of education of the participating units would appoint two members who are parents or guardians of students attending the School, and, to the extent possible, reflect the demographic composition of the participating unit. The Board would be required to consult with the Council when considering changes to the School's operations that may significantly impact students.

Funding. For each child that enrolls in the School, the State and local funds that would be allocated to the participating unit on a per pupil basis for that student would be allocated to the School. Additional amounts for children with disabilities and children with limited English proficiency would be allocated.

Transportation and food service. A participating unit must develop a plan to provide transportation to students living in the district. The local school administrative unit identified in the initial resolution would be required to provide food services to the School, to the extent practicable.

Criminal history record checks. The Board would be authorized to do criminal history checks on school personnel and would be required to adopt a policy on whether and under what circumstances to do criminal history checks on school personnel.

Tuition waiver. Tuition for students attending the School would be waived for coursework at North Carolina community colleges and UNC constituent institutions provided the regional school and the constituent university or community college has a written agreement with the regional school.

Sections 4 allows regional schools to adopt the early college model through the cooperative, innovative high school program.

Section 5 makes conforming changes to existing statutes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The act would be effective when it becomes law.

Wendy Graf Ray, counsel to Senate Commerce, substantially contributed to this summary.

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